



**January 21, 2004  
Conservation Commission  
Approved Meeting Minutes**

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**I. Meeting opened** at Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) conference room, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, at 7:07 pm.

Present were: Conservation Commission (CC) members John Reinhardt, Kim Stollar, Cassandra Koutalidis, Michael Fager, Chair, Delia Kaye, and Agent Anne Phelps. Also present were Ben Ericson, Attorney with the MA Attorney General's Office, and Frank Senesi, the new Director of Veterans Affairs.

Introductions were made.

Ben Ericson is interested in becoming a member of the CC, is a former member of Foley Hoag, and colleague of Kim Stollar. He has been a Somerville resident for a couple of years, and is interested in becoming more active in the community.

Frank Senesi is interested in finding out more about the status of Hansen Community Garden and Memorial.

Review Minutes

Minutes from December 22, 2003 were reviewed and minor corrections made.

**Vote: Motion made by CK to accept minutes of December 22, 2003, as amended. DK seconded. All in favor.**

Minutes from the Special Meeting of December 3, 2003 (to consider proposed changes to Assembly Square District zoning) were reviewed and minor corrections made.

**Vote: Motion made by CK to accept Special Meeting minutes of December 3, 2003, as amended. DK seconded. All in favor.**

**II. Administration**

MACC Conference Attendance – providing that the PO is approved, Anne needs to know how many CC members plan to attend the MACC Spring Conference so she can make reservations early to obtain the discount on conference fees. It was agreed CC members

will notify Anne by email by the end of the month – MACC must have registration and fees by Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> for discount.

### **III. Budget**

Budget Report- Anne reported nothing new in budget since last meeting, but asked whether the CC intended to continue paying for Port-A-Potty cleaning at the Community Growing Center (CGC) into calendar year 2004. The CC agreed to continue to pay for this service until the end of FY04 or until the PO was exhausted, whichever came first. Anne will send a letter to the Friends of the CGC to that effect.

### **IV. Old Business**

FY03 Annual Report- this item was deferred from the Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. CC Members agreed to have comments to Anne by the end of January.

CC Banner - Anne brought the recently completed banner to show to the CC. The banner will be displayed at events sponsored by the CC, and events in which the CC participates to advertise the efforts of the CC.

### **IV. New Business**

#### Frank Senesi Inquiring about Hansen Community Garden & Memorial

Frank Senesi said the Mayor wants him to find out about Hansen Park, and he had come to ask the CC what it was doing and when the project would get off the ground.

MF, who originally asked the city to use the space for a garden, has been coordinating efforts for this project. He responded that the CC does not know how long it will take to develop the site. The site was given to the CC in January of 2002, and the CC began holding meetings with the community to develop a plan for the site. The CC used the Magoun Square mailing list, and added names as contacts increased. During the meetings, residents suggested adding a memorial to Sgt. Henry Hansen. Sgt. Hansen was a Somerville native, and one of the marines who raised the flag at Iwo Jima. There are relatives of his living near the site. A landscape architect created a conceptual plan for the site (MF has the design), which incorporates about 17 garden plots and a corner site for the suggested memorial. The estimated cost is \$150,000 to build the Garden and Memorial. The cost is very high because of the site's geography. It slopes in two different directions and would need to be terraced.

Mr. Senesi said that he thinks we should give the site to CVS, and give back the \$10,000 that CVS donated for the Garden, and let CVS plant and maintain the site, as an "Adopt – A-Spot."

CC members asked whether the CVS donation had been restricted to use for the memorial. MF said that he was at a meeting with CVS and community leaders at which

he showed the conceptual drawings to CVS officials and Mr. O'Donovan, the latter whom suggested to CVS that they might want to make a donation to the project. CVS then agreed to donate \$10,000 (which is currently in an OHCD escrow account). Subsequently Mr. O'Donovan convinced the Bd. of Aldermen to give the open lot (obtained by the city for back taxes) to the CC to develop a Community Garden and a memorial to Sgt. Henry Hansen according to the landscape plans he (Mr. O'Donovan) had been shown.

Since that time, MF believed that the Veterans Affairs Director was working with local veterans groups to plan a fund-raising effort for the project. The veterans groups had a sign made that was erected at the site, indicating that a Community Garden and Hansen Memorial was planned. MF has been investigating alternative methods for handling funds if members of the public wish to make donations that are tax exempt. However, MF stated that to raise the amount of money estimated by the landscaper might need several years.

Mr. Senesi said the Veterans Affairs Office is not involved in any fund raising for the project, nor are the veterans groups working to raise funds for the park. He said the mayor wishes to see something developed at the site by this summer.

CK asked Mr. Senesi whether the Mayor would be satisfied if the CC used the \$10,000 donated by CVS to develop a garden on a scaled-down plan as an interim use of the space, while working to raise funds to carry out the more elaborate design for the garden and memorial.

DK suggested the CC discuss this further among its members, and she would communicate the CC's thoughts on the project to Mr. Senesi within a week. Mr. Senesi left the meeting at this time. Further discussion among the members of the CC followed.

**Vote: CK moved that the CC propose to Mr. Senesi and the Mayor that the \$10,000 donation by CVS be released to the CC to design and implement an interim plan for Hansen that would entail use of the Park by this (2004) summer. MF seconded the motion. All in favor.**

SPSR Reviews – Anne reported that Eamon has decided that Planning Department will no longer ask the CC to review SPSR submissions for storm water and/or open space issues. The Planning Department (Ezra Glen) instituted the policy change of routinely submitting SPSRs to the CC for their comments in 1998. The last such plan submitted to the CC was the plan for CVS in Magoun Square. The CC agreed that Anne should send a letter to Planning stating the continued willingness of the CC to perform this service, and noting that the decision to discontinue this policy is that of the Planning Department, and not the CC.

Waterfront Overlay District – Anne reported that OHCD has confirmed that the Waterfront Overlay District protection has been removed from the current Assembly Square District re-zoning modifications without informing or consulting with the CC

The CC helped develop the language for the Overlay District in cooperation with other city departments and officials. The CC agreed that Anne should write a letter, and pursue the issue of CC consultation/participation in any such zoning decisions.

Since the meeting is running behind schedule,

**Vote: DK moved that the CC table the next item, Plant donations for Glen and Durrell, and all items under Committee Reports until a subsequent meeting. CK seconded. All in favor.**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Phelps, Agent